

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 4A

THE WASHINGTON TIMES  
28 March 1983

## Ex-sergeant claims Army once plotted to kill Barbie

DAYTON, Ohio (AP) — A former Army sergeant claims U.S. agents wanted to kill Nazi Gestapo officer Klaus Barbie rather than turn him over to French intelligence after World War II, the Dayton Daily News reported yesterday.

U.S. and French agents disliked and mistrusted each other, and at one point, American agents even drew straws to determine who would carry out the assassination, said Gene Bramel of Centerville, near Dayton, in a copyrighted story in the newspaper.

"We trusted the French just about as much as we did the Russians," said Bramel, who was a sergeant in the 66th Army Counterintelligence Corps in Augsburg, Germany, from 1950 to 1952.

The French wanted Barbie — called the "Butcher of Lyon" — for war crimes he allegedly committed while Gestapo chief in Lyon. He is accused of causing the deaths of thousands of French Jews and Nazi resisters.

Barbie, now 69, fled Germany to South America, reportedly in 1951, and lived there until last month. Bolivia expelled him and he was flown to France for trial on charges of "crimes against humanity."

The French twice convicted Barbie of war crimes of killing Resistance fighters and sentenced him to death in his absence, but the statute of limitations has expired. Since the French death penalty has been abolished, Barbie faces a life sentence in the new trial.

Bramel said U.S. agents were concerned about communists in French intelligence and feared Barbie could compromise U.S. intelligence work.

Bramel, now a representative of a student exchange program, said his unit worked with Barbie to gather information on the German Communist Party and to coordinate the activities of other Europeans running "safe houses."

The assassination plans went so far that agents drew straws to carry out the assignment. Bramel didn't get the short straw, and he wouldn't say who did.

"If worse came to worse, the one who drew the short straw would take him up to the Autobahn [highway] and shoot him," said Bramel. "Drive him up the Autobahn at night. Pull off in a parking place. Shoot him. Push him out. Come back."

Bramel said what he thinks happened instead: "We were informed the Air Force had come up with an alternate plan to blowing [Barbie's] brains out, and that was to get him to South America. That's all we were told and we weren't in on anything after that."

Bramel said he learned most of his information through rewriting reports submitted by other agents. He said Barbie "basically belonged to the Department of Army Detachment."